



County Executive's Newsletter to the Commission



HAPPY NEW YEAR!

How are we planning on accomplishing our goal(s)?

Our December newsletter asked the question **“What are we trying to accomplish?”** The short answer given was to improve livability and improve our standard of life.

This newsletter tackles the question of how can we accomplish those goals. The County Commission set forth very forward-looking, concrete financial plans in February and March of 2011 with the adoption of a Debt Management and Capital Investment Plan along with a Fund Balance Policy. Now, I know this sounds very boring but please stay with me as we take our next steps.

The Debt Plan insures that we are not borrowing long-term for short-term assets or back-loading debt payments. The Capital Plan insures that we replace both our short-term and long-term assets in an orderly fashion within a structured plan.

The Capital Investment Plan will now start assisting Roane County in the management of our operational funds by having most capital assets purchased not from operational funds but capital funds.

What should this accomplish? Our operational budgets should reflect the cost of delivery of required and desired services for our citizens for annual operations and these budgets should become more consistent over time without spikes and contractions if capital assets are purchased within the operational funds. Thus, the Operational Funds shall become more readable, understandable and manageable.

The Capital Fund should be a repository of both short and long-term planning and related budgets. The Operational Fund should be more specifically directed to furnishing day-to-day resources that should meet our needs of enhanced liability.

We now have the Capital and Operational Cost separated and shall take the next step in managing the County's finances by managing the Debt Service Revenues and Capital Revenues together. This process of management allows the tax rates to be more constant comparing the Debt Tax and Capital Tax. An example would be 2011 General Debt Tax of \$0.14 and Capital Tax of \$0.03 equaling a total tax of \$0.17. For 2012, if the Debt Tax could be reduced by 1¢ (must still comply with Debt Policy); the Capital Fund would be increased by 1¢. The total taxes for Debt and Capital for 2011 to 2012 would remain the same at \$0.17.

By electing to balance the debt and capital revenue with one another the county is establishing a system which we invest in purchasing capital assets instead of borrowing for their purchase. We fully understand that the system will not always balance but we are committed to establish and work the plan and only take exceptions when fully discussed, disclosed, and approved by the legislative body.

Summary:

- Operational Budgets should be, year-to-year, more consistent and understandable budgets.
- Capital Budgets will be both for short-term and long-term planning and will experience more percentage of change.
- Debt tax rates and Capital Fund tax rates will be considered together in budget planning.

**With this, The Budget Season has begun. Let's Celebrate!!!
Happy Budgeting!!!**

Grant News (by Joyce Nall)

- **The Department of Economic and Community Development 's Energy Division recently announced Roane County's award of a \$100,000 Energy Efficiency and Conservation Block Grant.** The funds will be utilized to replace the Courthouse HVAC system. Money for this project had already been budgeted and receiving the grant is a perfect way to stretch our available funds. Since the county had already planned on this project, no additional match money is necessary. The work should begin in early spring of 2012.
- The Department of Environment and Conservation has awarded Roane County a \$24,600 grant to upgrade and replace existing oil collection equipment at the Convenience Centers. This is a 100% grant with no match required. The funds will be used to replace the oil collection tanks and absorbency pads at several of the convenience centers.
- We recently received contracts on two Governor's Highway Assistance grants for the Sheriff's Department and Litter Grants from TVA and the Department of Transportation.
- We are still waiting to hear news of the awards on our ambulance grant from FEMA and the recreational trail grant from the Department of Environment and Conservation.
- Currently we are working on a Community Development Block Grant for the Midtown area to expand sewer services and another HOME grant to help provide home repair assistance to low and moderate income residents.

Thanks to the Roane County Highway Department for assisting the County in building a new parking lot behind the new jail. The property was purchased in November, the building was razed in December and work on the parking lot should be completed in January.

Thanks to Tom and his crew!

Firemen of the Year

Each year a fireman from each of the five (5) volunteer fire departments is honored as Fireman of the Year. Each respective department nominates individuals and the Fire Board selects the honoree. At the December Commission meeting, the following Firemen were presented this year's award:

<u>VFD:</u>	<u>Honoree:</u>	<u>Chief:</u>
Midtown	Lt. John McNeely	Randy Scarborough
Blair	Ty Sather*	Clarence Nelson
East	Capt. Andrew Murray	David Maupin
South	Capt. Michael Farrell	Doug Rose
West	John Cloudy	Charlie Redwine

*Ty Sather, at 13 years of age, is not old enough to be a Fireman but his contribution to the department earned him the recognition this year.

Do you know about . . .

The Historic Roane County Courthouse?

By Robert Bailey, Roane County Historian

Roane County is home to only one of seven antebellum Courthouses still standing in Tennessee. It was built between 1853 and 1855 for a cost of \$9,400. The architects were Frederick B. Guenther, a native of Germany, and Augustus O. Fisher. It was built by Fisher and John D. Lowery. It is a unique design of Federal and Greek Revival Architecture and, perhaps, the first split level courthouse built in the South. No nails were used in the original structure. During the Civil War, the building was used as a hospital and lookout by both Northern and Southern troops. Graffiti remains on a wall left by a Union Soldier in 1864. In 1937, a three story addition was added to the east side of the building. It was constructed by the Works Project Administration (W.P.A.). The W.P.A. was created as a program to put people to work during the depression. It marked the first time that the building had indoor plumbing. The building was used as a courthouse until 1974, when the current courthouse was constructed. Through two Department of Transportation Grants and donations, renovations were just completed including the restoration of the courtroom which will become a transportation museum highlighting Roane County's rich history of roads, steamboats and railroads.

**Congratulations to Major Ken Mynatt on earning his Master's Degree!
The Major recently graduated from Tusculum College. He is an inspiration to us all.**

WAY TO GO MAJOR MYNATT!

PURCHASING COMMISSION TO MEET (Lynn Farnham)

The Purchasing Agent, Lynn Farnham has been working with the County Executive to review and update the Roane County Purchasing Manual. The Purchasing Manual has not been updated in its entirety since the first edition was approved in the early 1980's. There have been policy changes throughout the years to increase bid thresholds, add the use of Purchasing Cards and other policies as was necessary to the operation of the Purchasing Department.

The County Executive, serving as the Chair of the Purchasing Commission has appointed and County Commission has approved Commissioner Nick Forrester, Lynne Spires and Doris Thompson to the Purchasing Commission thus far. One more appointment is expected to be made at the January County Commission meeting and Wade Creswell has agreed to fill the open slot.

The County Executive is planning to call a meeting of the Purchasing Commission just after the final appointment is made to present the updated manual and to discuss other policy issues. After the Purchasing Commission approves the Purchasing Manual, a resolution will be filed with County Commission for final approval.

**Joint Workshop on Education
Financial Plan**

The Roane County Commission and the Board of Education will hold a Joint Workshop to discuss the **Education Financial Plan for 2013** on Thursday, January 12, 2012 at the Transportation Conference Room in the building located behind the Midtown Educational Center. The agenda is:

1. School test scores
2. Future education funding/budgets
3. State education funding formula

Commission Action December 12, 2011

- Rejected Resolution #12-11-22 relative to the Open Meeting Act.
- Adopted Resolution #12-11-23 allocating space at the old jail and second floor of the courthouse to be assigned to various county departments.
- Adopted Resolution #12-11-24 allowing land at the old landfill site to be used as a radio-controlled airfield. The Purchasing Department will send out Request for Proposals in the near future.
- Adopted Resolution #12-11-25 to provide a bonus to county employees, excluding school system employees.
- Adopted Resolution #12-11-26 authorizing the application for a Community Development Block Grant of \$500,000.

General Fund 101

The General Fund of the county is for the operation of general government including the health department, sheriff department, jail and courthouse.

The General Fund is supported by several small taxes and fees paid for government services, but the largest revenue source is Property Tax. Property Tax accounts for 57% of the revenue. Currently there are 62 pennies of Property Tax designated to the general fund. Other large sources of revenue are; TVA assorted payments, grants to support the operation of the health department, and combined fees collected by all of the fee offices.

Administration of Justice and Public Safety are the largest expenditures within the general fund. Public Health and Welfare as well as Social, Cultural and Recreational Services are all included in the general fund.

Beginning Fund Balance:	\$3,868,206
Revenues:	\$14,433,454
Expenditures:	(\$15,134,024)
Ending Fund Balance:	\$3,167,636

Roane County Writers' Group

The Roane County Writers' Group held its 3rd annual Scholastic Awards Program on Friday, December 16, 2011. Bill Landry was the emcee again this year. County Executive Ron Woody attended and presented a certificate to the scholarship award winner, Abigail Stevenson for her poetry work, "Wild Words for a Way Gone World". Commissioner Carolyn Granger recognized the Writing Teacher of the Year, Mrs. Sharon Parks of Midway Middle School. Senator Ken Yager attended and addressed the group.

Congratulations to the many winners and entries. Special thanks to the Roane Writer's Group for its Scholarship Awards Program.

The winners' works will be compiled into a book. At the request of Timothy Joseph, Ron Woody sent a copy of last year's book to First Lady Obama and received a very gracious reply.

Five Point Star Management System

As you know, we have identified a strategy to tackle issues, challenges, opportunities and problems of county government by focusing on five (5) major projects at any given time. Our website has been updated with changes to two of the five major points. More details are available on the website: www.roanegov.org, but in summary here are the current focuses:

- Recreation/Tourism – started: March 2011
- Emergency Services – started: September 2010
- Departmental Policies/Management – started: September 2010
- Sewer Operations and Capital Plan – started: December 2011
- Risk Management – started: December 2011

Recent past focuses:

- Midtown Sewer Expansion ---- started: November 2010—ended: December 2011
- Implementation of 2012 Capital Plan ----started: September 2010—ended: December 2011

Let's Focus, Develop a Plan/Strategy, Execute/Deliver, and Evaluate the Results.

Reuse of Old Jail:

Work has started on the old jail building. The roof has been completed. Clean-up of the inside continues. Painting, electrical upgrades and some plumbing work are taking place. Thanks to Ty and his crew from the Sheriff's Department for their help. Work will continue.

The old jail will be used primarily for Juvenile offices, three detectives and record storage.

TVA Foundation Meeting – December 21, 2011:

The TVA Foundation Board met in December and had an update on approved projects, reviewed the program budget and took action on two issues. First, the total budget is \$43 million. All funds had been budgeted with the exception of \$496,630.00. Approval was made to release to Roane County the last scheduled TVA payment of funds to replace lost property taxes. This approval was for \$284,762.13. This left an unused budget of \$4,941.87 for taxes.

The Foundation Board then approved unanimously to transfer to Roane County the combined un-programmed funds of \$501,571.97 to be used exclusively for the Swan Pond Sports Complex. TVA had previously granted use of approximately 75 acres and now a jump-start to fund the construction of the Sports Complex.

Thank you to the Foundation and TVA.

January Meetings and Events:

January 3, 2011 – Sheriff's Liaison Committee meeting – 6:00 p.m. – at the Sheriff's Office

January 4, 2011 – Planning Commission – 7:00 p.m. – at the Courthouse

January 5, 2011 – Budget Committee – 6:00 p.m. – at the Courthouse

January 9, 2011 – County Commission – 7:00 p.m. – at the Courthouse

January 10, 2011 – Fire Board – 6:00 p.m. – at the Courthouse

January 12, 2011 – Joint County Commission and Board of Education Workshop to discuss education financial plan for 2013 – 6:00 p.m. at the Transportation Conference Room (building behind Midtown Educational Center)

If you have an item of interest related to our county, please submit to Sheila or me. Deadline for submission is the last Friday of the month.

Ron